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FM AMEMBASSY RIYADH
TO RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE 0985
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0920
INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 4768
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 0811
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0033
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

S E C R E T RIYADH 000748

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/FO, NEA/ELA, NEA/ARP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/06/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [LE](#) [SA](#)

SUBJECT: LEBANON: EX-SAUDI AMBASSADOR TO LEBANON THINKS
MARCH 14 COALITION WILL "EKE" OUT VICTORY

REF: A. BEIRUT 605

[B](#). RIYADH 662

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Ambassador Richard Erdman, for reasons
1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#). (S) Former Saudi ambassador to Lebanon and current Minister of Culture and Information Abdul Aziz Al-Khoja told Ambassador in a June 7 meeting that he and other Saudi leaders expect the March 14 coalition to "eke" out a victory in the June 7 Lebanese parliamentary elections. The minister said he believed that if the Hizballah-led March 8 alliance happened to do better than the March 14 coalition in the elections, Hizballah would offer Saad Hariri the premiership. The Saudi government, he added, was advising Hariri not to join a unity government. Asked if Hariri was inclined to follow the Saudis' advice, Khoja said he judged that Hariri would refuse such an offer.

[2](#). (C) Comment: Khoja's views on the election have evolved somewhat from a month ago. See ref B for a report of his meeting with NEA DAS David Hale on May 6, during which the minister expressed alarm over the possibility of a Hizballah victory.

[3](#). (U) Other topics discussed at the meeting (mainly economic) will be reported septel.
ERDMAN